



## August 2025 Newsletter

***Our Mission:*** *The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and the world.*

***Our Vision:*** *Radiating the light of Christ, the Presbytery of Geneva thrives as a community of servants, lifting up every congregation and leader in ministering together.*

The purpose of the newsletter is to announce upcoming events and opportunities sponsored by the Presbytery, its congregations, the Synod of the Northeast, the PC(USA), neighboring presbyteries, and partner agencies. If you have an item for the September newsletter, please send the information to [officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org](mailto:officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org) by **August 25, 2025.**





# RETIRED PASTORS, CRE'S, AND SPOUSES

And Those Considering  
Retirement

## LUNCHEON

THURSDAY

# SEP 11 2025

**11:30 - Coffee Social**

**Noon - Lunch**

**Afternoon - Wagon/Boat Tour  
(Weather Permitting)**

**RSVP to:**

**[leadercare@presbyteryofgeneva.org](mailto:leadercare@presbyteryofgeneva.org)**

**CAMP WHITMAN  
150 WHITMAN ROAD  
PENN YAN, NY**

# Advocacy Training Opportunity in Ithaca, NY

## Connection to Transformation: Building a Partnership Culture in Faith Communities Conference

October 24–25, 2025

First Presbyterian Church  
315 N. Cayuga Street  
Ithaca, NY



Rev. Dr. Kathryn Threadgill



Rashida Tyler



Juana Cortes de Torres, Esq.



Rev. Dr. Rose Niles



Henry-Louis Taylor, Jr., PhD.



Rev. Dr. Eileen Lindner



Rev. Dr. Greg Garis



Michael Borges



Rev. Marjorie Ackerman



Ricardo Witt



Rev. Peter Cook



Elder Larry Beasley



Rev. Dr. SanDaena Gaultman Ashley

This two day event is sponsored by the Synod of the Northeast and the New York State Council of Churches, and will included many great speakers and local advocacy groups.



New York State  
Council Of Churches

Please register at:  
[bit.ly/45pN9yU](https://bit.ly/45pN9yU)  
or scan the QR Code.



Synod of the Northeast

## October 24 1–4pm and October 25 9am–5pm

The New York State Council of Churches and the Synod of the Northeast are partnering to host Connection to Transformation: Building a Partnership Culture in Faith Communities, October 24–25, 2025, at First Presbyterian Church in Ithaca, NY.

This powerful two-day gathering begins with the Council's first Regional Advocacy Day—a direct response to faith leaders across New York who asked for more accessible, local opportunities to engage. Regional advocacy days are designed to equip clergy and lay leaders with tools to address pressing issues in their communities, effectively communicate with elected officials, and build lasting networks. This is the first regional Advocacy Day and will bring elected representatives together with faith leaders to focus on the issues facing communities in Western NY. We also encourage faith leaders to attend the Statewide Ecumenical and Interfaith Advocacy Day in March 2026, that will focus on the legislative priorities that impact the entire state and enable faith leaders from different regions to work collectively.

Saturday, October 25 will bring together ecumenical and interfaith pastors, lay leaders, organizers, and advocates from Central and Western New York, the conference will explore how faith communities can foster transformational partnerships through connection, collaboration, and mutuality. Participants will engage in worship, storytelling, workshops, and keynote conversations—all centered on moving from transactional to authentic, justice-rooted relationships.

The tools and inspiration for those serving in congregations, nonprofit ministries, and ecumenical initiatives to build a culture of shared purpose and faithful presence—especially in small towns and rural communities.

Join us as we listen, learn, and reimagine the future of the Church and the communities we are called to serve. Together, we move from connection to transformation.

[Register Here](#)

# COMMITTEE ON MISSION AND WITNESS



The Elmira First Presbyterian Church continues its partnership efforts with Iglesia Presbiteriana in Lares, Puerto Rico. In July, member Kathy Menges and Juana Tunison (Horseheads PC) traveled to the island and participated in a fund-raising event with the deacons of the Lares church. The women spent two days preparing “pasteles” to help with the costs associated with building maintenance. These “pasteles” are similar to the Mexican tamales, with masa, pork or chicken, achiote, wrapped in plantain leaves, tied into little bundles, and steamed.

This event is wholly significant, as it represents the third and final phase of “partnering”. The first phase is always rescue, recovery, and relief. (All materials and resources are supplied by the visiting team members.) This phase began in January of 2018, four months following Huracán María. The First Presbyterian Church of Elmira sent more than a dozen teams from then until the present, removing mold, restoring homes damaged by the winds and rains, and establishing “hermandad”, fellowship with the people of Lares.



In Phase II, the partners work side-by-side to restore, renovate, and deepen their “hermandad”. In a natural disaster, restoration efforts can take years to address and/or complete. The visiting team only enables the host team in making decisions and executing efforts, thus having them take

“ownership” of projects. In this phase, visiting teams offer some financial aid, while the host team offers what it can. (Widow’s mite)

In Phase III, the hosts plan and execute efforts, including financial responsibility, exclusive of the partner. Nevertheless, the “hermandad” remains strong and consistent, with continued communication between the two. The hosts are able to function autonomously, although the partners remain at the ready in the event of another natural disaster.

The partnership that Elmira shares with Lares, is widening among our presbytery. In February of 2026, Juana (Joanne) is looking into to the possibility of a Presbyterian Women mission trip. In April 2026, plans are underway for a clergy mission trip, and in July of 2026, along with Wilmari Vargas, Executive Director of Campamento Guacio, (similar to our Camp Whitman), plans are already underway for a youth mission trip.



## ***Let us remember, our Presbytery Mission:***

The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and in the world.

Respectfully submitted,  
Juana (Joann) Tunison, Mission and Witness Chair

# Country Breakfast

**Oaks Corners Presbyterian Church**

**County Road 6/ Pre-Emption Road, Oaks Corners, NY  
(5 miles north of Geneva on County Road 6/ Pre Emption Road)**

**Saturday, August 16 & 23, 2025 - 7:00am - 11:00am**



**Pancakes,  
Bacon, Sausage, Scrambled Eggs, Home-fries,  
Coffee, Juice, and Milk  
Adults \$12, Children 5-10 yrs. \$2.50, Under 5 yrs. Free**

The background is a light beige color with several small red dots scattered throughout. Four hands are illustrated around the central blue box: one at the top left holding a heart, one at the top right, one at the bottom left holding a heart, and one at the bottom right. The central blue box contains the main text and meeting details.

PRESBYTERY OF GENEVA

# SMALL CHURCH GATHERING

An online discussion for fellowship and sharing

TUESDAY  
AUGUST

5

10:30 AM

ZOOM

MEETING ID: 822 7523 4616

PASSCODE: 494665

We hope you will join us!



**VOLUNTEER TO HELP US BUILD OUR NEWEST HOME AT A**

# **FRAMING FRENZY!**

**AUGUST 23, 2025**



**ZION FELLOWSHIP  
5188 BRISTOL RD.  
CANANDAIGUA, NY 14424  
10AM-2PM  
REGISTRATION  
BEGINS AT 9:30AM**

**INCLUDES "CELEBRATION  
BROWN BAG LUNCH"**

**PLEASE RESERVE  
YOUR SPOT BY  
CONTACTING  
LINDA WERTS AT  
315-447-0276  
LWERTS@AOL.COM**

**COORDINATED BY THE UNITED CHURCH  
CANANDAIGUA, ZION FELLOWSHIP, AND GRHFH**

# Torah Story

## An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch

Online Course

Tuesday Evenings 6:30–8:30pm

October 7, 14, 21, 28, November 4

Open to anyone

For more information or to register  
for this course, please contact:  
cfranks1128@aol.com

Required Text:

Torah Story

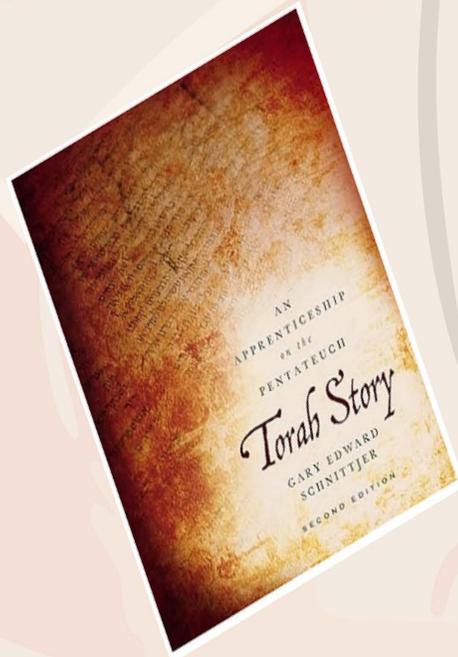
2<sup>nd</sup> edition

An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch

by Gary Edward Schnittjer

ISBN # 978–0310112778

An accompanying workbook is also available  
for those interested in deeper study



This course counts as continuing education for CRE's in the Presbytery of Geneva

If you would like to make a donation toward the continuation of this ministry, please go to [www.presbyteryofgeneva.org](http://www.presbyteryofgeneva.org) to make a contribution to the general fund.  
Thank you for your generosity.

All profits from dinner and donations go directly to Camp Whitman, and will be matched up to **\$15,000** by anonymous donors.

**You can double your gift to Camp!**

Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to become an event sponsor.



# ITALIAN

DINNER FUNDRAISER  
for

**CAMP + WHITMAN**

**NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

921 College Ave., Elmira, NY 14901

Saturday, September 13, 2025

5:00-8:00 pm

\$20 per plate  
Or sponsor a  
table of 6 for \$200

Choice of:  
Stuffed shells in marina,  
Baked Chicken,  
Vegetable Lasagna

Tossed Salad  
Garlic bread  
Vegan/Gluten free  
Lasagna option

To reserve and pay for your dinner, click [here](#) or scan the QR code by September 8.



## Presbyterian Church Growth Network launches!

There is a new Presbyterian Church Growth Network, and guess what - it's growing! At our May Presbytery meeting, we introduced this new network. Its purpose is to help churches learn authentic growth techniques, foster conversations about healthy church growth, and encourage one another in growing plans. Although there are a lot of sophisticated church growth programs out there, most of them are geared toward evangelical churches with conservative social ideas; this network is theologically Presbyterian and specifically and deliberately welcoming of all.

Want to learn more or get involved?

1. Join the Facebook group and start to interact with others:  
"PC(USA) Church Growth Network"
2. Visit the website [www.pcgrowthnetwork.org](http://www.pcgrowthnetwork.org) and connect with the group!
3. Come to the first PCGN Conference this October 7-8 in Englewood, NJ - see the website for more info.
4. **JOIN OUR PRESBYTERY'S NEW PCGN GROUP!**

Our local group is hoping to start meeting this September, by Zoom, at a regular monthly meeting time. The group's purpose will be to walk the growth journey with one another: cultivating and keeping useful statistics, practicing church habits that lead to growth, troubleshooting obstacles with one another, and encouraging each other with accountability and prayer.

Interested? Email Rev. Kirianne Weaver from the FPC of Ithaca:  
[kirianne.fpci@gmail.com](mailto:kirianne.fpci@gmail.com) by August 25!



## Trainings for Training

St. Benedict Center | Schuyler, NE | November 10-13

Rev. Bethany Benz-Whittington is a PC(USA) pastor living in Maryville, TN. She serves as the Stated Clerk for the Presbytery of Genesee Valley in Rochester, NY, and leads Sacred Calls, focusing on progressive faith formation and training. Outside of ministry and parenting, Bethany enjoys exploring creative faith expressions, connecting with community, and fostering inclusive spaces.

See Bethany's work in action at our November event, Trainings for Training - learn more and register at our [website](#) or click the button below.

[Event Registration and  
Information](#)

### Questions?

Contact our Director of Programs, Rev. Tricia Dillon Thomas at [programs@opsf-omaha.org](mailto:programs@opsf-omaha.org)



# MARCHING FOR JUSTICE

A few photos from Rev. Leah Ntuala's march from Seneca Falls, NY to the ICE Detention Center in Batavia, NY



## The Process of Aging and Implications for Ministry

Our pastors, parents and other loved ones who shaped us are aging. In the Process of Aging and Implications for Ministry course, you'll learn how theological reflection with older adults can help them address the challenges of aging.



You'll examine how congregations, senior-care organizations, families, and caregivers can challenge ageist assumptions and adapt to the diverse needs of aging populations with dignity, equity, and creativity.

In addition, you'll also:

- Uncover the physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of aging as an integrated, lifelong process.
- Identify and challenge personal and systemic ageism in caregiving, ministry, and community contexts.
- Design or evaluate programs, services, and ministries that center older adults' agency, dignity, and belonging, informed by current research and best practices.
- Integrate cultural awareness, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of work with aging populations.

### Details

Date: September 22 – October 31, 2025

Location: ONLINE

Facilitator: Zeena Regis

*Zeena holds an M.Div. degree from Columbia Theological Seminary. She is a Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., a hospice chaplain, an author, and a curriculum writer. She serves as the Faith Engagement Manager at Compassion & Choices, the nation's oldest, largest, and most active nonprofit working to improve care, expand options and empower everyone to chart their end-of-life journey.*

The program fee is \$265.

**For additional questions about the course or Older Adult Ministry certificate program, contact [lifelonglearning@ctsnet.edu](mailto:lifelonglearning@ctsnet.edu)**

**[REGISTER NOW](#)**



Dear Church Family,

## **Jesus Christ is Living Water for our Body and Soul**

If there is anyone interested in being part of a Water ministry of **Living Waters for the World**, the next [Clean Water U training](#) is **Sept. 23-27** at [Hopewell Camp and Conference Center](#) in Oxford, MS and we'd love to have you and your team at this training session! We currently have openings in each of our workshops - water project management, health education, and water system installation. If you are interested, contact Ken Allen or Linda Werts. Or visit [Livingwatersfortheworld.org](http://Livingwatersfortheworld.org) website.

***“All Gods Children deserve Clean Water”***

**God Bless!**

# Donate to the Presbytery online!

## Presbytery of Geneva

Search 



### Presbytery of Geneva General Fund

Give now



### Camp Whitman

Give now



### Individual per capita contribution

Give now



### Ordination and Installation Offerings

Give now



### Presbytery Meeting Offerings

Give now

Online Giving for Camp Whitman and the Presbytery of Geneva is available from our website. Make contributions to Camp Whitman, the Presbytery's General Fund, Individual contributions to per capita, Ordination and Installation Offerings, and Presbytery Meeting Offerings. This is through the Presbyterian Foundation and long-time partner, Vanco, so it is very secure to use.

On our homepage [www.presbyteryofgeneva.org](http://www.presbyteryofgeneva.org), click on the "Make a Contribution" link or go directly to our Vanco donation page Donate to Presbytery of Geneva. You can select our general fund, Camp Whitman, per capita, Ordination and Installation Offerings, Presbytery Meeting Offerings, and others in the future as we roll them out.





## Top PC(USA) News of the Week



### [PMUN welcomes Young Adult Delegation to UN high-level gathering](#)

Forum focuses on the progress and challenges of reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals



### [First Presbyterian Church of Kerrville ministers to Texas flood victims, prepares for long-term recovery](#)

Sunday service remembers Ruling Elder Jane Ragsdale, who died in the flooding



### [Center for the Repair of Historic Harms launches Project 180](#)

PC(USA) reengages Liberia centuries after Presbyterians helped to colonize it



### [BeLoved Asheville shows love to Texas after devastating flooding](#)

North Carolina nonprofit reciprocating compassion it received after Hurricane Helene



### [Unification: It's more than an org chart](#)

A member of the Unification Commission explains what commissioners have learned



## PRC Practical Resources for Churches



### **HANDS TO WORK, HEARTS TO GOD CRAFT GROUP**

After stopping our in-person HANDS TO WORK, HEARTS TO GOD CRAFT GROUP during the pandemic, Practical Resources for Churches is planning to start a virtual "new version" where we can share our love of crafting and desire to connect with God online. Come join us on Zoom every month and bring any "lap work" you may have. While we craft, we will listen to and discuss readings from Joyce Rupp's book, *Constant Hope*.

We meet on the third Thursday evening of every month from 7 to 8 p.m.  
If interested, please call or email Karen Smith at PRC  
Phone: 631-821-2255  
Email: [karen@prcli.org](mailto:karen@prcli.org)

### **JOIN OUR ONLINE BOOK CLUB**

***THE END OF THE OCEAN* by Maja Lunde**  
**September 13, 2025 11:00 am – 12:00 pm**

In 2019, seventy-year-old Signe sets sail alone on a hazardous voyage across the ocean in a sailboat. On board, a cargo that can change lives. Signe is haunted by memories of the love of her life, whom she'll meet again soon. In 2041, David and his young daughter, Lou, flee from a drought-stricken Southern Europe that has been ravaged by thirst and war. Separated from the rest of their family and desperate to find them, they discover an ancient sailboat in a dried-out garden, miles away from the nearest shore. Signe's sailboat. As David and Lou discover Signe's personal effects, her long ago journey becomes inexorably linked to their own. An evocative tale of the search for love and connection, *The End of the Ocean* is a profoundly moving father daughter story of survival and a clarion call for climate action.

[Click here to register.](#)

***THE FIFTH MOUNTAIN* by Paulo Coelho**  
**November 8, 2025 11:00 pm – 12:00 pm**

In the ninth century BC, the Phoenician princess Jezebel orders the execution of all the prophets who refuse to worship the pagan god Baal. Commanded by an angel of God to flee Israel, Elijah seeks safety in the land of Zarephath, where he unexpectedly finds true love with a young widow. But this newfound rapture is to be cut short, and Elijah sees all of his hopes and dreams irrevocably erased as he is swept into a whirlwind of events that threatens his very existence.

Questions email [karen@prcli.org](mailto:karen@prcli.org)

*Calling all young adults (18-35) who are passionate about climate justice and creation care! Presbyterians for Earth Care is building a faith-based network of young people who are leading the way in environmental advocacy - from local congregations to the PC (USA) to the national stage. Is that you? Or does it describe someone you know? Join us by completing our interest form: [bit.ly/PECYANetwork](https://bit.ly/PECYANetwork). Then, tag a friend who's ready to take action and share this with your community.*

**Presbyterian Earth Care**

Visit the Earth Care  
website [here](https://www.pcc.org/earth-care)

# Young Adult Environmental Justice Advocacy Network

**A faith-based network for Presbyterians and their friends, ages 18-35, advocating for creation and climate justice**

**Join us!**

**[bit.ly/PECYANetwork](https://bit.ly/PECYANetwork)**





PRACTICAL  
RESOURCES FOR  
CHURCHES

## Serve With Confidence

*Child Safety, Teacher Training, and Curriculum Preview*

### Teacher Training Workshops



Join us for a 90 minute session that covers the nitty gritty of teaching children and youth. We'll go over best practices in education, how to set up your classroom, how to effectively manage your classroom so that everyone thrives, and ways to carry the learning in the classroom into the home. Bring your questions!

*Free for congregational members and those part of a subscribing judicatory; \$150 for non members, which includes a year's congregational membership.*

[register for 8/20; 1-2:30 pm eastern](#)



### Child Protection Policy Basics

Join us for a 45 minute session on the basics of a child protection policy. We'll cover the nitty gritty details; how to make sure you have structured your spaces so that you have proper coverage, what to look at when you are going off site, best practices for emergency situations, and what clear lines of reporting look like. This is not a substitute for your own congregation's training on their policy, but a review of the basics and why we need to have policies in place. Bring your questions!

*Free for congregational members and those part of a subscribing judicatory; \$150 for non members, which includes a year's congregational membership.*

[register for 8/12; 2 pm eastern](#)



### Summer Faith Formation for the Generations

Quality children's moments, faith formation that brings the generations together, and resources that you can easily email/text to your people- we have them!

[Visit our store](#)

# Connection to Transformation

## **Building a Partnership Culture in Faith Communities Conference**



### **SAVE THE DATE**

#### **A Collaborative Conference with the New York Council of Churches**

The Synod of the Northeast, in collaboration with the New York Council of Churches, is excited to present:

#### **Connection to Transformation: Building a Partnership Culture in Faith Communities Conference**

**Saturday, October 25, 2025 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

*First Presbyterian Church  
315 N. Cayuga Street  
Ithaca, New York*

This gathering will bring together ecumenical and interfaith pastors, lay leaders, organizers, and community advocates from across the Central and Western New York region to explore how transformational partnerships can emerge when faith communities center connection, collaboration, and mutuality. Through worship, storytelling, interactive workshops, and keynote conversations, participants will reflect on how churches can move beyond transactional relationships toward deeper engagement that reflects the love and justice of Christ in our small towns and rural communities.

Whether you serve in a local congregation, a nonprofit ministry, or an ecumenical initiative, this conference will offer tools and inspiration for building a culture of authentic partnership rooted in shared purpose and faith.

Join us as we listen, learn, and reimagine the future of the Church and the communities we are called to serve. Together, we move from connection to transformation.

**Registration will open in July! Stay tuned for registration details and speaker announcements.**

[Read Article on Website](#)

Help your community and your health by joining the **Seneca County House of Concern, Food Pantry & Thrift Store Canal Walk fundraiser!!!**



## **SC HOUSE OF CONCERN CANAL WALK & SCAVENGER HUNT**

**JOIN US FOR A WALK  
DOWNTOWN AND ALONG  
THE LUDOVICO TRAIL.**



**AUGUST 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2025**

Begins @ Trinity Church - 10:30

Adults \$20, Kids under 10 \$5

### **About Our Event!**

Join us as we begin our walk at Trinity Church, walk through downtown Seneca Falls and then along the Ludovico Sculpture Trail. We end our walk at the Elks club

**PRE-REGISTER AT THE  
HOUSE OF CONCERN**

### **Event Highlights**

#### **Fundraising Initiatives** ◀

Have your friends sponsor your walk to help raise money for the SC House of Concern

#### **Food & Drinks** ◀

End your walk at the Elks Club where you will be treated to hamburgers and hotdogs

#### **Scavenger Hunt** ◀

Scavenger items will be placed along the walking path

#### **Raffles** ◀

Buy raffle tickets for an opportunity to win amazing prizes!



Contact us  
315-568-2433

22 Locust Street  
Waterloo

[www.houseofconcern.org](http://www.houseofconcern.org)

## Opportunities and Information

### A message from the Office of Christian Formation

[Small Church Community Circles](#). Connect with faith leaders in small church settings. Learn about new resources. Pastors, CRE, educators, volunteers all welcome. [Register](#) once for all the dates. Attend all or any of these! A variety of days and times to capture a variety of schedules. **Tuesday, August 19, 2025**—3 pm Eastern; **Wednesday, October 8, 2025**—11 am Eastern; **Thursday, December 4, 2025**—1 pm Eastern.



Planning ahead for Fall Christian Formation? Perhaps a fall kickoff, back to school blessing, teacher commissioning, or giving out bibles? [Check out all the resources](#). The PC(USA) Planning calendar designates the week of **September 7th for Christian Formation** emphasis but we know some churches start back in August with fall programming.



# Share Your PHOTOS

Send us your pics! If your church has photos of recent events to share, please email them to the presbytery office at:

[officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org](mailto:officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org)

before the monthly deadline (found each month on page 1)  
and they'll be added to the next newsletter.